(b) if so, what are the details and the highlights thereof; and

(c) what benefits are likely to accrue to the country following this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Increase in activities by Chinese Army along Border

†2780. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Chinese army has increased its activities along Uttaranchal and Himachal border; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There has been no significant change in the Chinese activity along Uttaranchal and Himachal border. The security forces are constantly monitoring the situation along the border keeping in view the threat perception.

Visit of Defence Minister to Japan and China

2781. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the objectives pursued by Government during recent visits of Defence Minister to Japan and China;

(b) the summary of the outcome of the said visits;

(c) whether talks were held for consolidating strategic partnership for peace and stability in the region;

(d) the details of the MoU or accord, if any, reached as a result thereof; and

(e) the details of the ranks of the Ministry of External Affairs who accompanied him on these visits, besides the Indian Embassy officials posted at Tokyo and Beijing?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Raksha Mantri visited Japan from May 25—28,2006 at the invitation of Japanese Minister of State for Defence Mr. Fukushiro Nukaga. Raksha Mantri held in-depth discussions with Mr. Nukaga on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interests focusing in particular on cooperation between India and Japan in the areas of security and defence cooperation. It was agreed during the discussions to pursue cooperation, by promoting, dialogue, exchangee and mutual understanding between the two sides. Raksha Mantri met the Japanese Minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Kazuo Kitagawa and discussed mutual cooperation between the Coast Guards of India and Japan on maritime security. He also had useful interactions with Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Mr. Shinzo Abe and Foreign Minister Mr. Taro Aso. During the visit, the need for both Governments to work together was reaffirmed. The broad objectives of India-Japan cooperation in defence and security fields and the specific areas of cooperation and suggested mechanisms for the implementation of these objectives were also defined. Overall, it was a successful visit, that would help in strengthening the defence and security related cooperation between India and Japan.

Raksha Mantri visited China from May 28—June 2, 2006. He held delegation level talks with the Chinese Defence Minister General Cao Gangchuan, the Foreign Minister Li Zhaozing and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. During the visit, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Exchanges and Cooperation in the field of Defenoe. The MOU provides framework for mutual exchange between leaders, high level functionaries of Defence Ministries and armed forces of the two sides, study tours and exchanges between military academies of two countries, training and exercises in the areas of search and rescue, anti-piracy, counter-terrorism and other areas of mutual interest, etc.

Raksha Mantri also visited the Lanzhou Military Region of China, which is the Chinese Military Command across the Western and Middle Sectors of India-China border areas. His visit has carried forward the momentum of high-level exchanges between India and China in the military field and contributed to greater mutual understanding and trust between the two armed forces.

Joint Secretary (East Asia) from Ministry of External Affairs accompanied Rakha Mantri as part of his delegation to Japan and China.